CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Vieux Carré Commission

Guidelines for Site Elements & Courtyards

SITE ELEMENTS & COURTYARDS

Site elements frame the architecture along a streetscape and in a courtyard. Established site patterns and components, such as a sidewalk, building, courtyard wall, gallery post, fence and/or walkway, provide a consistent setting that is unique to the quality of the urban fabric of the French Quarter. While there is a certain regularity to the public elements of the Vieux Carré, there is greater variety in elements within an individual courtyard, be it residential or commercial. Many have been modified over time to meet the needs and preferences of its past and present owners.

The Vieux Carré Commission (VCC) encourages a property owner to develop an appreciation of the historical and environmental characteristics of their property and its immediate surroundings and allow that appreciation to inform their design prior to developing plans to alter a site element or courtyard. This approach will facilitate a more compatible relationship between a property and its neighborhood, both in the public and private realms, while retaining the essence and quality of the open space in the Vieux Carré.

SECTION INDEX

The VCC has jurisdiction to review and approve all site element and courtyard installations, modifications, materials and features. This section includes:

- Vieux Carré Courtyards; VCC Courtyard Review – 10-2
- Courtyard Covering & Enclosure; Balcony & Gallery Privacy Screening – 10-3
- Walls, Fences & Gates; Landscape Walls & Piers – 10-4
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The only plantings subject to VCC review are those required for screening of non-contributing site elements such as ground-mounted equipment.

All applicants must obtain a Vieux Carré Commission (VCC) permit as well as all other necessary City permits prior to proceeding with any work. Reviewing and becoming familiar with these *Guidelines* during the early stages of a project can assist in moving a project quickly through the permit approval process, saving an applicant both time and money. Staff review of all details is required to ensure proposed work is appropriate to a specific property.

Guidelines addressing additional historic property topics are available at the VCC office and on its website at www.nola.gov/vcc. For more information, to clarify whether a proposed project requires VCC review, or to obtain a property rating of significance or a permit application, contact the VCC at (504) 658-1420.

The first step in using these *Guidelines* is to understand a property's color rating. The rating corresponds to the historical and/or architectural significance and then determines what type of change will be permitted and the review process required for each property under the jurisdiction of the VCC.

Review boxes provided throughout the *Guidelines* indicate the lowest level of review required for the specified work. Staff can forward any application to the Architectural Committee (AC) and/or the Commission for further consideration.

A passageway can provide an occasional view of courtyards for pedestrians, with a glimpse of sunlight and plantings beyond.

VIEUX CARRÉ COURTYARDS

The typical site plan within the Vieux Carré has a primary building constructed along the sidewalk edge and sometimes along the side and/or rear property lines. To the rear and/or side of the primary building is often an internal ground-level open space, or courtyard, which is framed by a service building, neighboring building, garden wall and/or fence.

Historically, a courtyard provided inhabitants with a space to raise livestock, maintain a small garden, store a carriage, complete household chores such as laundry, and access to a rear service building. Although automobiles have replaced carriages and chickens are no longer a yard staple, the open space of the courtyard remains integral to the historic character of the French Quarter.

Courtyards comprise most of the privately owned open space within the Vieux Carré. In residential uses, these spaces are private for a single-family property, but may be semi-private at a multi-family property such as where a primary and/or service building has multiple occupants. At a commercial property, a courtyard can provide an outdoor seating area for a restaurant or bar, or perhaps access to a rear store or art gallery. For pedestrians along a sidewalk, courtyards provide views of treetops and foliage over garden walls and occasional glimpses of sunlight and plantings at the end of a passageway or through a gate.

OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS

The exterior of a property includes areas outside of buildings such as a courtyard or carriageway. **Open space is an exterior area that is open from the ground to the sky.** Exterior areas covered by a building element such as a balcony, gallery, porch, roof overhang, stair or other projection, as well as a shed or small structure are not considered open space. The Zoning Commission regulates the required percentage of open space for each city parcel.

CONSOLIDATION OF OPEN SPACE

Because of the integral historic nature of a building and its courtyard, the intimate relationship should be preserved. **The consolidation of the open spaces of adjoining parcels is not allowed by the VCC.**

VCC COURTYARD REVIEW

While a courtyard, carriageway and/or passageway space can be enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike, it should be cared for in a manner that maintains the historic essence of its site and the sense of openness of the character defining space. With the exception of plantings and furniture or furnishings easily movable by a single person, the VCC regulates all aspects of a proposed modification to a courtyard, carriageway, passageway or side yard. These include the addition, modification or removal of any of the following:

- An existing building – Refer to *Guidelines for New Construction, Additions & Demolition*
- A secondary building larger than 100-square feet – Refer to *Guidelines for New Construction, Additions & Demolition*
- An existing building surface including a wall surface, ceiling of a passageway or carriageway, balcony, gallery, porch, window or door – Refer to applicable *Guidelines* sections
- Exterior lighting and/or security cameras – *Guidelines for Lighting & Security Cameras*
- A courtyard covering, enclosure or roof, including an awning, sun shade or semi-permanent tent – page 10-3
- A wall, fence and/or gate – page 10-4
- Paving at a walkway, driveway, patio, passageway, carriageway or sidewalk – page 10-8
- Non-movable, semi-permanent, outdoor furnishings such as a bench, built-in barbecue pit, heater or gazebo – page 10-9
- A built-in planter or raised planting bed – page 10-9
- Items requiring plumbing or piping for operation such as a sink, bar or cooking area – page 10-9
- A small structure such as a shed or enclosure 100-square feet and smaller – page 10-10
- A water feature such as a fountain, pool, hot tub, fish pond and related equipment – page 10-11
- Ground- or wall-mounted equipment including a speaker, television display, air conditioner unit, generator, solar collector, satellite dish or television antennae – page 10-11

Courtyards comprise most of the privately owned open space in the French Quarter. A courtyard can be private or semi-private, residential or commercial.

COURTYARD COVERING & ENCLOSURE

Many properties in the French Quarter have elements that act as a covering or enclosure in a courtyard to protect inhabitants from inclement weather or the harsh sun, and expand the comfortable use of the residential or commercial exterior space. These include:

- Balcony, gallery, porch and/or roof overhang
- Carriageway and/or passageway ceiling
- Recessed loggia

These building features have long provided shade and protection from the elements allowing inhabitants to cross between buildings on a property to perform outdoor tasks. Today's use of courtyard spaces is often more leisure-oriented.

Contemporary roof structures come in many forms including an umbrella, tent, canopy and/or awning, as well as more permanent roof construction of either solid or translucent materials. **To maintain the sense of openness to the sky in a courtyard or yard, the VCC regulates all roof structures that are mounted to a building element or wall, or are too large to be moved by a single person such as an awning, oversized umbrella or semi-permanent, ground-mounted structure such as a tent.**

A table umbrella can provide movable shading for dining. Also note the recessed, arched loggia at this Creole townhouse, now a restaurant.

Louvered blinds can provide screening of a service wing balcony or gallery where privacy is a concern.

BALCONY & GALLERY PRIVACY SCREENING

On many buildings in the Vieux Carré, a balcony or gallery performs the role of an exterior corridor for the rooms located in a service wing. The traditional method of providing privacy for occupants walking between rooms along these exterior corridors was to add louvered blinds to the exterior side of the balcony or gallery. In locations where privacy is a concern, the VCC encourages the use of traditional screening methods that include louvered blinds, or a drop awning, appropriate to the building's type and style.

COURTYARD COVERING & ENCLOSURE GUIDE

All permanent, semi-permanent and temporary coverings or enclosures, including a tent, are subject to review for conformance with the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. Contact the City Planning Commission or Department of Safety and Permits for requirements.

The VCC does not regulate structures or furnishings that can be moved by a single person, such as a table umbrella or tent installed for a special event that is promptly removed after the event.

THE VCC REQUIRES:

- Maintaining openness to the sky in a courtyard

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- Installing a movable, temporary covering, such as an umbrella, rather than mounting a more permanent roof structure to a building

THE VCC DOES NOT ALLOW:

- Installing a permanent courtyard covering or enclosure

BALCONY & GALLERY SCREENING GUIDE

THE VCC REQUIRES:

- Limiting the enclosure of a balcony or gallery with louvered blinds to only those locations with a demonstrated need for additional privacy

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- Installing a drop awning at a balcony or gallery where shading is desired and louvered blinds are inappropriate (Refer to *Awnings, Guidelines for Signage & Awnings*, page 12-8 and photograph caption, *Guidelines for Balconies, Galleries & Porches*, page 08-9)

THE VCC DOES NOT ALLOW:

- Enclosing a balcony, gallery, porch or loggia with a wall, window or door

This brick wall conceals a garden beyond and includes access gates supported by brick piers for vehicles and pedestrians. A brick planter with shrubs and carefully maintained wall plantings is located between the gates, providing visual interest along the streetscape.

WALLS, FENCES & GATES

Walls, fences and gates are important elements of the overall character of the French Quarter. They:

- Identify property boundaries
- Provide privacy and security
- Separate public from private property and are often a major element of a streetscape
- Relate to a building's type and architectural style

An important characteristic of the Vieux Carré is that the front elevation of most buildings is built along the sidewalk, limiting the location of a wall or fence along the street frontage. As a result, the most prominent walls and fences are located at corner properties, where they are used to enclose a rear or side yard or courtyard. In addition to separating a property from the sidewalk, a wall or fence is used to separate adjoining properties. When considering the construction of a new wall, fence or gate, it should be designed to be compatible with the architectural character of the primary building's type and style. (Refer to *Guidelines for Building Types & Architectural Styles*.)

A horizontal board fence separates two adjoining properties. A wrought iron, picket fence is located along the sidewalk. It has an arched gate supported by decorative cast iron gate posts.

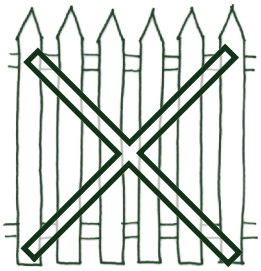
LANDSCAPE WALLS & PIERS

Landscape walls in the French Quarter historically were constructed of masonry to enclose a courtyard and provide privacy along a street. The walls were often a continuation of a building's masonry walls, particularly at a townhouse, defining the street wall.

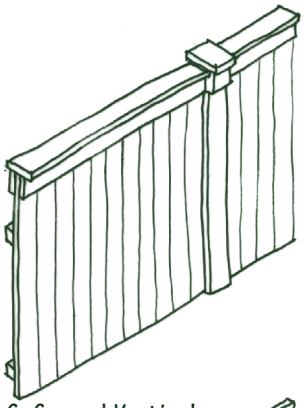
A landscape wall and piers typically are constructed of masonry with either a brick or stucco finish. The wall or piers can be installed alone or in combination with metal picket fencing. A privacy wall enclosing a courtyard or yard lining a sidewalk is generally 6- to 8-feet in height, while a low wall, also referred to as a chain wall, is generally 12- to 18-inches in height and topped with an iron fence. **Similar to masonry on a building, a brick or stucco wall and piers require regular maintenance and repointing with appropriate mortar.** (Refer to *Guidelines for Masonry & Stucco*.)

The VCC does not allow the construction of a wall that visually blocks a primary building façade from the public right-of-way. The VCC does not allow the application of stucco to an existing brick wall without documentation. In addition, the VCC does not allow the construction of a new wall or piers with exposed concrete block. A new wall or pier must have either a full-size brick or stucco finish.

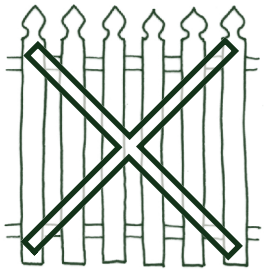
Similar to building walls, landscape walls and piers require regular maintenance. The crack is an indication of a potential structural problem.



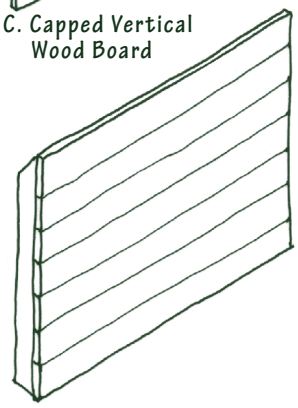
A. Pointed Wood Picket



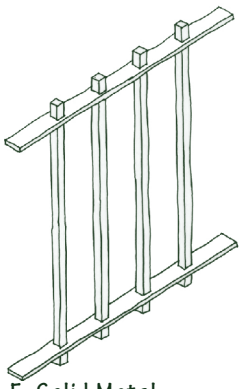
C. Capped Vertical Wood Board



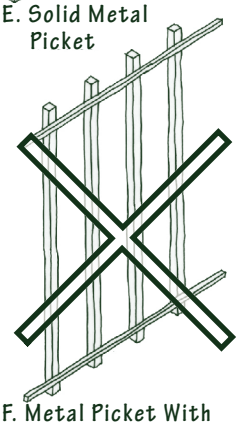
B. Gothic Style Wood Picket



D. Horizontal Wood Board



E. Solid Metal Picket



F. Metal Picket With Welded Bars

There are a variety of available fence styles and types; however, there are few fence styles that are appropriate in the Vieux Carré. A wood picket fence, with either a pointed or Gothic style top (Examples A and B) is generally not appropriate. A vertical or horizontal wood board fence (Examples C and D) is typically about 6- to 8-feet tall and is generally located at a rear or side yard. A metal picket fence varies in height, but is generally limited to 5-feet inclusive of chain wall, if located at a front yard. When installing a metal picket fence, the pickets should be solid and punched through the horizontal bars, either at a 45-degree angle or parallel to the bars as shown in Example E. Pickets welded onto a bar (Example F) for a fence or gate are not allowed by the VCC.

FENCES

A fence in the French Quarter is either wood or metal, and sometimes installed on top of a masonry chain wall. Historically, the style of a fence and its level of detailing were linked to the building's style and the fence's location on the property. A more elaborate and expensive fence, such as wrought or cast iron, tended to be located at the front elevation of a building that was set back from the street. Simple wood fences were used to separate neighbors' properties at side and rear yards. Taller and highly elaborate fences were installed at grand, high-style homes, while simple, low wrought iron fences were installed at vernacular houses like shotguns. Some homes, like bungalows and Arts and Crafts style houses built in the 1910s to 1920s, were built without a fence.

Metal Fences

Beginning in the 1850s, cast iron became a prevalent fence material complementing the proliferation of cast iron balconies and galleries of the period and providing a much longer lifespan than wood. The casting of metal into molds allowed fences and gates to be made of highly elaborate and detailed patterns. By contrast, wrought iron tended to be used for simple, slender pickets. One of the advantages of iron fencing is that it is visually "thinner" but more secure than wood, increasing the view of the front of the building from the public right-of-way. (Refer to *Guidelines for Balconies, Galleries & Porches,* page 08-4, for maintenance.)

The installation of a welded hollow metal tube fence or a chain link fence is not allowed by the VCC.

Wood Fences

Most wood fencing in the French Quarter is located at side and rear property lines, separating neighbors. These fences tend to be solid, constructed of wide horizontal boards fastened to vertical wood posts, or vertical boards with a molded wood cap, approximately 6- to 8-feet in height. **A wood fence of pickets or other vertical boards with shaped tops is not appropriate in the Vieux Carré.**

A common problem with a wood fence is it deteriorates over time. Wood fences:

- Require regular repainting
- Rots, particularly when exposed to ground water
- Are susceptible to termite damage – Can provide a pathway for termites to enter a building if mounted to a wall – Refer to *Termites, Guidelines for Exterior Woodwork,* page 05-8
- Often needs regular replacement

For additional information regarding the maintenance and repair of a wood fence, refer to the *Guidelines for Exterior Painting* and *Guidelines for Exterior Woodwork*.

Wood fences in the Vieux Carré are typically made from painted horizontal or vertical wood boards with a wood cap.

This elaborate cast iron entrance gate is supported by granite piers. It is of similar design to the cast iron fence mounted above the stucco chain wall which includes a granite cap.

GATES

A pedestrian gate, traditionally along a walkway or passageway, is generally 2- to 4-feet wide. When installed along a fence, a gate tends to be of a similar material as the fencing. When installed along a masonry wall, a gate that provides the public entrance to a property, and its flanking gate posts, are often more elaborate than the adjacent walls. When installed on a masonry wall or pier, a gate may be either wood or metal. A gate to a rear or side yard or alley is often less elaborate than one at a front yard.

A single or double gate for residential vehicular access is approximately 10-feet wide with a 12-foot curb cut. Because of the width of the opening, a large wood gate will likely warp over time. To achieve and maintain the appearance of wood, it is generally best to install wood cladding on a supporting metal frame. If installing automatic door operators, the VCC requires all associated equipment to be located away from the public view, with required exterior sensors installed as discretely as possible.

T**he installation of welded hollow metal tube gate is not allowed by the VCC.** (Refer to *Example F*, page 10-5.)

This automatic gate provides vehicular access into the courtyard. The door sensor is discreetly located near the bottom of the brick pier on the left.

The metal spikes rotate around a central bar and are known as a hedgehog.

Fish-hook style metal pickets are a clearly visible deterrent to a potential intruder.

SECURITY AT WALLS, FENCES & GATES

To prevent an intruder from entering a courtyard or yard, a variety of security devices are prevalent throughout the Vieux Carré at the top of a walls, fences, gates, balconies, galleries and/or posts. Traditional security devices are intrinsic to most metal fence designs in the form of pickets. Other security devices include:

- Metal pickets, spikes and barbs
- Vertical extension of an existing gate and/or fence – Gates and walls should be designed holistically and not as an additive process – If a taller gate or fence is desired, a new gate or fence should be designed to fulfill the height needs in a manner that is compatible stylistically with the building's type and style
- Electronic sensors, preferably wireless, that transmit to a security monitoring company as well as activate alarms and/or lights – *Preferred option*
- Glass set into mortar at the top of a wall – Can become airborne in the event of a storm – *Not recommended*
- Barbed wire or razor wire – *Prohibited by the Building Code*

When selecting a security device for the top of a wall, fence or gate, it is important to remember that in addition to keeping an intruder out, the device can also delay or prevent a first responder (a fireman or police officer) from entering a property. To act as a visual deterrent to an intruder as well as provide a first responder with an understanding of their risk when entering a property, it is recommended that each security device be readily visible. Another possibility is to deter a potential trespasser with thorny plants, such as a rose.

Glass set into mortar at the top of a wall can become airborne in a storm – Not recommended.

The solid panels above and next to the gate deter potential intruders.

A glimpse of the courtyard and rear service building are visible over the wall. The solid, vertical board, wood gates along the brick wall provide privacy with two separate pedestrian entrances and one vehicular entrance.

WALL, FENCE & GATE GUIDE

In addition to VCC review, City Planning Commission and Department of Safety and Permits review is required for each proposal to add or modify a wall, fence and/or gate to ensure conformance with the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and Building Codes. The Department of Public Works reviews all proposals for a curb cut at a street and sidewalk.

FRONT & SIDEWALK PROPERTY LINES

THE VCC REQUIRES:

- A wall, fence or gate to be compatible with the type and style of the main building
- Metal fencing to be either wrought or cast iron, or an alternate solid material, such as aluminum, typically with a matte black painted finish
- Solid metal pickets to be punched through horizontal rails and not welded to the face of a rail
- Automatic gate equipment to be located discretely out of public view
- A wall or chain wall to be limited to 18-inches in height at a front property line with a brick or stucco finish that is approved by VCC with regard to color, type, texture and pattern
- A wood fence to have appropriately scaled boards, typically 11- to 16-inches wide at a horizontal board fence and 4- to 6-inches wide at a vertical wood board fence
- A painted wood finish or opaque stained finish to appear as a painted finish (paint, stain or preservative treatment helps protect the wood, particularly for softer woods like pine, making the fence or gate last longer – Refer to *Guidelines for Exterior Painting*)

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- Simple detailing for a metal fence
- Electronic sensor security devices, preferably wireless, to be located discreetly along a wall, fence and/or gate, that can trip an alarm sensor and transmit it to a security monitoring company and activate alarms and/or lights instead of installing a physical barrier
- Readily visible metal pickets and spikes as an alternative to electronic security options

THE VCC DOES NOT RECOMMEND:

- Glass set into mortar at the top of a wall

THE VCC DOES NOT ALLOW:

- Vinyl or synthetic fencing, gates or garage doors
- Chain-link fencing
- Wood lattice fencing
- Hollow tube-welded metal fencing or gates
- Wood picket or stockade fences, or other vertical board wood fences with a moulded top
- Barbed wire, concertina wire, razor ribbon wire and other similar security devices – *Prohibited by the Building Code*
- Vertical extension of an existing gate and/or fence
- Solid wood fencing or a wall located at the front façade of a building
- Removal of an existing historically appropriate fence in good condition – An application will be reviewed on a case by case basis
- Exposed concrete at block wall or piers
- Metal fencing taller than 5-feet when located between the street and main building façade
- Glass, plastic or Plexiglas applied to a fence or gate
- Fencing on a balcony, gallery, porch, stoop or stair

SIDE & REAR YARDS

A fence, wall and/or gate that is approvable in the front of a building may also be approvable at the side and rear.

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- A painted wood fence, typically of pine, cedar or redwood, to have wide, horizontal boards or vertical boards with a wood cap – The cap will help the fence last longer

PAVING

Paving, which includes a sidewalk, walkway, patio and/or driveway, has changed significantly since the 19th century due to the development of new materials. Historically, paving could be as simple as crushed oyster shells or a hard material, like brick or flagstone laid in a simple or ornamental pattern. Materials popularized in the 20th century include concrete and asphalt and, more recently, cast concrete pavers, often colored and shaped to resemble brick or cobble stone.

Thin slabs of flagstone are likely to loosen and crack, requiring more frequent replacement and creating a tripping hazard. Each slab should be a minimum of 1-1/2-inches thick, preferably 2-inches, to prevent cracking.

Many sidewalks in the French Quarter are brick laid in a herringbone pattern.

In order to retain the quality of the District, the VCC requires the retention, repair and maintenance of existing historic paving materials. Similarly, the VCC encourages minimizing the use of new paving and using traditional paving materials in new installations whenever possible. When using non-traditional paving, like concrete at a new construction project, the VCC recommends landscaping to minimize its visual impact. As the character and context of every property is unique, each application for a nontraditional paving material is taken on a case by case basis.

SITE MAINTENANCE

Keeping a site clear of debris will aid in drainage during a storm and reduce the potential for debris becoming airborne in a high wind. In addition, if not promptly removed some types of debris, such as garden waste and wood items, can become a home for termites and other pests. (Refer to *Termites, Guidelines for Exterior Woodwork*, page 05-08.)

ADDITIONAL CITY OF NEW ORLEANS PAVING REQUIREMENTS & REVIEW

The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) dictates the allowable paving, buildings and structures at a parcel. Contact the City Planning Commission or Department of Safety and Permits to review allowable paving and construction areas on a parcel prior to submission of an application to the VCC.

In addition to VCC review, paving is subject to the following City of New Orleans requirements:

- A property owner is required to maintain the public sidewalk and not impinge on pedestrian path requirements – Contact the VCC and the Department of Public Works for additional information related to sidewalks
- A property owner is not allowed modify the drainage pattern of their property in a manner that increases storm water runoff to a neighboring property
- Contact the Department of Parks and Parkways for information related to street tree regulation

PAVING GUIDE

The VCC has jurisdiction over all paving on private property.

THE VCC REQUIRES:

- Replacing existing brick or stone paving in-kind, matching what is existing in material and pattern appropriate to the building type and construction period
- Retaining historic paved drainage channels unless they impede safe access along a pedestrian way

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- Minimizing the amount of paving on a site
- Using traditional stone or brick at an area of new paving with mortar appropriate to the masonry hardness to prevent "ridges" at too-hard mortar joints (Refer to *Guidelines for Exterior Masonry & Stucco*, page 06-4)
- Installing 1-1/2- to 2-inch thick flagstone paving to minimize cracking typical of a thinner flagstone
- Avoiding the installation of gravel or other loose, small-scale paving that can become airborne in the event of a wind storm
- Using a simple, steel-troweled concrete finish – The design and color of concrete subject to VCC review

THE VCC DOES NOT ALLOW:

- Installing asphalt paving at any location
- Installing stamped concrete paving or concrete pavers except with the possible exception of new construction
- Creating a parking area in the front yard of a building

OUTDOOR FURNISHINGS

Sidewalk and courtyard furnishings help a property owner use and enjoy their exterior spaces. Outdoor furnishings can include:

- Furniture (seating, tables, umbrellas, portable heaters, etc.)
- Built-in or mounted seating, planters and bicycle racks
- Food and beverage storage, preparation equipment and service areas
- Garden features (gazebo, pergola, etc.)
- Entertainment devices such as a television screen or display, as well as audio speakers and equipment

Outdoor furnishings affect the historic integrity of a site and its surroundings. For this reason, property owners are encouraged to select outdoor furnishings that will meet their changing needs and can be readily moved to minimize their impact on the historic character of the Vieux Carré. If a built-in planter or larger-scale furnishing that is not readily movable is desired, then VCC review is required to ensure that the visual impact is minimized. VCC review of outdoor furnishings is required for:

- Built-in, wall-mounted, ground-mounted, oversized, and/or heavy furnishings that are not readily movable by a single person on daily basis by either lifting or pushing on permanently mounted wheels
- All wall- or ground-mounted entertainment devices
- All wall- or ground-mounted food and beverage storage, food preparation equipment and service areas
- Furnishings that require piping including a water supply and/or drainage or a permanent utility line – A readily movable appliance operated by a portable propane gas tank, such as a barbecue grill, or a furnishing using temporary piping such as a garden hose is not subject to review

As part of its review, the VCC considers the potential visual and physical impact of a proposed furnishing on a property, as well as its surroundings, and might require relocation of the proposed furnishing or appropriate screening.

These tables and chairs can easily be relocated and are not subject to VCC review. They can be stored indoors during a storm. The planter, fountain, attached awning and wall light are all subject to VCC review. Wall-mounted planters are discouraged as they can harm masonry walls.

The open vertical joints or weep holes at the base of this brick planter allow built-up water to escape.

BUILT-IN PLANTERS

A built-in landscape planter can be an enjoyable garden feature adding visual interest to a courtyard. In addition to containing soil and plantings, a raised planter can retain water and, if not properly designed, can act as a pool. Long-term contact with saturated soil can damage a planter's retaining wall as well as an adjacent building or garden wall. **To protect historic building materials and an adjacent neighboring property, the VCC requires the installation of an air space or a plastic or rubber lining within a built-in planter that is adjacent to historic masonry and drainage weep holes to allow water to escape.**

STORM PREPAREDNESS

Readily movable outdoor furnishings, as well as those furnishings that are not securely fastened, can become airborne in a high storm wind. The selection of easily transportable furnishings can facilitate storm preparation.

OUTDOOR FURNISHINGS GUIDE

The VCC has jurisdiction over all outdoor furnishings on a parcel that cannot be readily moved by a single person or that require installation of piping.

THE VCC REQUIRES:

- Installing a plastic or rubber liner in a built-in planter adjacent to a historic or neighboring wall, with weep holes draining towards the courtyard

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- Minimizing the amount of large-scale and mounted outdoor furnishings on a site
- Installing permanent wheels on larger outdoor furnishings to allow them to be readily movable

THE VCC DOES NOT RECOMMEND:

- Installing a built-in furnishing that impedes pedestrian access along a sidewalk such as a planter, bench or bicycle rack – Contact the Department of Public Works
- Mounting a planter on a wall as it can damage masonry

SMALL STRUCTURES, SHEDS & ENCLOSURES

A small structure or shed can be functional or for recreation. They are generally less than 100-square feet in size and include a tool or garden shed, play house, dog house, laundry shed and outdoor restroom. A shed or enclosure can also be used to screen equipment, such as pool or mechanical equipment or a garbage bin, and can be constructed with or without a roof structure.

A modern addition like a shed may affect the historic integrity of a site and its surroundings. A small structure, shed or enclosure should be constructed of materials that are approved for the existing main building such as a wall and/or roof. (Refer to appropriate *Guidelines* sections.) **The installation of a pre-manufactured shed, particularly one with metal or vinyl wall cladding, is not allowed in the Vieux Carré.**

Any small structure or shed should be minimal in size with a form that is compatible with all existing buildings on the property. (Refer to *Compatible Design Principles, Guidelines for New Construction, Additions & Demolition*, page 14-4.) It should also be located to minimize its impact on the historic character of the surrounding area (generally to the rear of the main building), to minimize its visibility from the public and to ensure that it does not block the view of a historic building or feature. Where the proposed location might have a negative visual impact, the VCC might require landscape screening.

Some small, historic outbuildings have been re-purposed for contemporary uses. This outbuilding is used as a laundry facility, keeping heat and humidity outside of the main house.

SECONDARY BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

For information regarding a secondary building or structure such as a garage or larger shed, refer to *Secondary Buildings & Structures, Guidelines for New Construction, Additions & Demolition*, page 14-18.

The use of public garbage bins for commercial or domestic use clutters the sidewalk and is prohibited by the City of New Orleans.

REFUSE & RECYCLING

Refuse, garbage and recycling collection bins are often a visually obtrusive necessity. In the Vieux Carré, smaller commercial offices and shops use a rolling bin like those used at a single-family to four-family residential property. Large residential buildings and large commercial entities are required to have collection by a private company.

All roll carts and recycling cans should be kept on private property, out of public view and only left on the sidewalk for collection, then promptly removed. (Residential properties with four or fewer units can apply to the Department of Sanitation to allow for refuse pick-up in heavy-weight, black, 3-ply plastic bags instead of a bin.) Property owners are encouraged to store their refuse collection bin in a discretely located small structure or enclosure. For larger commercial uses including hotels, groceries, bars and restaurants where refuse collection bins are located on the property at the exterior of a building, they should be located to minimize visibility and screened with opaque fencing and/or gates that meet VCC requirements. In addition, solid fences and gates can be installed to reduce the visual impact. (Refer to *Walls, Fences & Gates*, page 10-4.)

SMALL STRUCTURES, SHEDS & ENCLOSURES GUIDE

THE VCC REQUIRES:

- Detailed, dimensioned plans and elevations for a small structure, shed and/or enclosure under 100-square feet in area, with all exterior materials noted for review

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- Minimizing the number of small structures, sheds and enclosures on a site – Group functions and uses together when possible
- Installing a compatible enclosure for concealing garbage and recycling bins

THE VCC DOES NOT ALLOW:

- Installing a highly visible or obtrusive small structure, shed and/or enclosure
- Installing a non-compatible, pre-manufactured shed or small structure, particularly one with metal or vinyl wall cladding

A pool must be an in-ground installation with a simple geometric shape like a rectangle.

WATER FEATURES

Pools, hot tubs, fish ponds and fountains are all water features that provide a property owner with enjoyment. However, these features often represent a significant alteration to a courtyard or yard and must be carefully designed to be sensitive to the historic character of a space. **As such, all water features are subject to the review of the VCC.**

In addition to the review of a water feature, the VCC reviews all associated equipment such as a pump and/or filter. (Refer to *Mounted Equipment*.) This equipment might require screening with a wall, fence, shed or screen enclosure or perhaps with landscaping. (Refer to *Walls, Fences & Gates*, page 10-4 and S*mall Structures, Sheds & Enclosures*, page 10-10.)

Screening is often required to conceal ground-mounted equipment. Air conditioner units are located behind the wood lattice.

MOUNTED EQUIPMENT

Some types of equipment require mounting to the ground, a building or a wall. Common types of mounted equipment include air conditioner condensers, generators, solar collectors, trash dumpsters, satellite dishes, antennae and mobile telecommunication equipment. All are examples of modern technology and devices that can affect the historic integrity of a site and its surroundings.

The property owner is required to minimize the size and quantity of mounted equipment, as well as locate it to minimize visibility in or on a courtyard, yard, balcony, gallery or porch. In addition, the VCC might require the installation of solid or shrub screening to diminish visibility. (Refer to *Walls, Fences & Gates*, page 10-4 and S*mall Structures, Sheds & Enclosures*, page 10-10.)

To minimize potential flood damage, the VCC recommends that all equipment be located above the ground and that all electrical connections include surge protection. Furthermore, equipment should be located in a manner that allows for required maintenance and minimizes the noise associated with its operation from being audible at a neighboring property.

WATER FEATURES; MOUNTED EQUIPMENT GUIDE

All water features and equipment installations are subject to review under the CZO. Contact the City Planning Commission and the Department of Safety and Permits to review allowable water feature construction areas for a parcel prior to submission of an application to the VCC.

THE VCC REQUIRES:

- A pool or hot tub to be an in-ground installation with the curb flush with the adjacent ground level
- A simple, geometric form for the pool or hot tub such as a rectangle or oval
- A fountain or a fish pond to be compatible with the historic and architectural character of the property

THE VCC RECOMMENDS:

- Minimizing the visibility and quantity of mounted equipment on a parcel
- Minimizing equipment noise bleed-over to a neighboring property
- Locating equipment so that it is raised above the ground plane with surge protection at all electrical connections

THE VCC DOES NOT ALLOW:

- Installing visually obtrusive mounted equipment
- Installing an above-ground pool or hot tub with the exception of a readily movable, plastic “kiddie” pool, which is generally limited to approximately 4-feet in diameter and 16-inches in depth

Courtyard Roof Structure; Balcony & Gallery Screening Review

Install drop awning at an upper level balcony or gallery; Replace louvered screening at balcony or gallery

1 2 3 Staff

Install or remove a courtyard roof structure; Install or remove louvered screening at balcony or gallery

1 Commission

2 3 Architectural Committee

Wall, Fence & Gate Review

Repair or reconstruct a wall, fence or gate with documentation; Install an electronic security system

1 2 3 Staff

Install wall, fence or gate security

1 2 3 Architectural Committee

Install a wall, fence or gate that meets *Guidelines;* Install a security device that does not meet *Guidelines*

1 Commission

2 3 Architectural Committee

Paving Review

Repair or remove historically inappropriate paving or replace paving in-kind

1 2 3 Staff

Remove appropriate paving; Install new or additional paving; Replace paving with a different material

1 2 3 Architectural Committee

Outdoor Furnishings; Planter; Small Structure, Shed & Enclosure; Water Feature; Mounted Equipment Review

Remove inappropriate small structure, shed, enclosure, water feature, furnishing, planter or equipment

1 Architectural Committee

2 3 Staff

Install a small structure, shed, enclosure or water feature; Remove an appropriate small structure, shed, enclosure or water feature; Install or remove an outdoor furnishing, planter or mounted (built-in) equipment

1 Commission

2 3 Architectural Committee

GENERAL SITE ELEMENT & COURTYARD REVIEW SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Detailed, dimensioned site plans, indicating the location of each proposed alteration that is subject to review – Site plans must include all existing and any proposed buildings; balconies, galleries and/or overhangs; walls, fences and gates; paving; built-in or wall-mounted furnishings or planters; small structures, sheds and enclosures; water features; and mounted equipment including equipment pads
- Manufacturer's specifications for: installation and mounting requirements and finishes for each outdoor furnishing that is not easily movable; entertainment equipment including a television and/or speaker; a small structure or shed; water feature; and mounted equipment
- Detailed, dimensioned elevation drawings and/or annotated photographs for all installation components, including brackets, fasteners and exposed conduit, are required for anything mounted to a building or wall
- Detailed, dimensioned plans and elevation drawings for all proposed new construction including a wall, fence, gate, built-in furnishing, planter, small structure, shed or enclosure

TERMITES & SITE ELEMENTS

Areas of moist soil, particularly adjacent to a building, can provide an ideal nesting location for subterranean termites. They can attack and nest in a tree or behind dense shrubbery or foliage, infesting surrounding trees or buildings and structures. An infested tree can become structurally damaged, allowing limbs to crack in a high wind. Treatment options typically require careful drilling into the tree and insecticide application. Termites also can be found in any wood or cellulose element including a wood pile, garden and construction waste and lawn furniture as well as a wood fence, shed and garage. (Refer to *Termites, Guidelines for Exterior Woodwork*, page 05-8.)

KEEP IN MIND…

- Verify the contractor is experienced in meeting VCC requirements and will obtain required approvals and permits
- Verify the ground slopes down and away from buildings to minimize water saturating a building wall and piers
- Dead tree limbs can snap and become airborne in the event of a storm or high wind – *Trimming is recommended*
- Some vines have roots that can damage historic mortar and stucco – *Consultation with a landscape professional is recommended*

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www.nola.gov/vcc

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